



Some are native to the state—
some just wrote about the place

Contemporary

T.C. Boyle

Drop City (F Boyle)

It is 1970, and a down-at-the-heels California commune devoted to peace, free love, and the simple life has decided to relocate to the last frontier, the unforgiving landscape of interior Alaska, in the ultimate expression of going back to the land.

Friend of the Earth (F Sci Boyle)

Idealism and satire blend in a story that addresses the universal questions of human love and the survival of the species. It is the year 2025, global warming is a reality, the biosphere has collapsed, and 75-year-old environmentalist Ty Tierwater is eking out a living as care-taker of a pop star's private zoo when his second ex-wife re-enters his life.



Tortilla Curtain (F Boyle)

Two couples in Southern California, one a pair of wealthy suburbanites, the other illegal immigrants from Mexico, whose lives intersect.

Anne Lamott

Crooked Little Heart

(F Lamott)

A wonderful depiction of the blood and bones of adolescence that's filled with sharp humor and transcendent moments.



Operating Instructions: A Journal of My Son's First Year (306.8743 L)

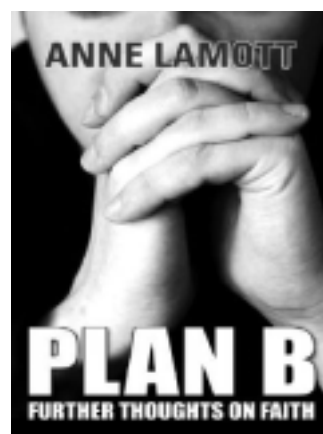
An honest, wildly enjoyable book written about motherhood; this is the author's account of her son Sam's first year. Lamott is a single mother and ex-alcoholic with a pleasingly warped social circle and a remarkably tolerant religion to lean on. She responds to the changes, exhaustion, and love Sam brings with humor, rage and befuddlement.

Blue Shoe (F Lamott)

A thoughtful novel, rooted in the domestic routines of child-raising. Blue Shoe follows the newly separated Mattie Ryder as she moves back into her childhood home, recently vacated by her elderly mother, and undertakes the renovation of her entire life.

Plan B: Further Thoughts on Faith (815.54L)

Lamott continues her spiritual journey with a treatise about parenting, relationships, and faith. Her humor and irreverence shine through as she enters hormonal middle age with a hormonal teenage son to raise. This book is an update of her life since *Traveling Mercies*.



Ursula K. LeGuin

Left Hand of Darkness (F Sci LeGuin)

Genly Ai, an emissary from the human galaxy to Winter, has a mission to bring the planet back into the fold of an evolving galactic civilization. The inventiveness and delicacy with which Le Guin portrays her alien world are unusual and inspiring.

Earthsea Cycle (various titles F Sci LeGuin)
 Winner of five Nebula and five Hugo Awards, the National Book Award, the Newbery, and many other awards, Ursula K. Le Guin is one of the finest authors ever to write science fiction and fantasy. Her greatest creation may be the powerful, beautifully written, and deeply imagined Earthsea Cycle, The books of the Earthsea Cycle are: *A Wizard of Earthsea* (1968), *The Tombsof Atuan* (1971), *The Farthest Shore* (1972), the Nebula-winning *Tehanu* (1990), and now, *Tales of Earthsea* (2001).

Amy Tan



***The Joy Luck Club* (F Tan)**

With wit and sensitivity, Amy Tan examines the sometimes painful, often tender, and always deep connection between mothers and daughters.

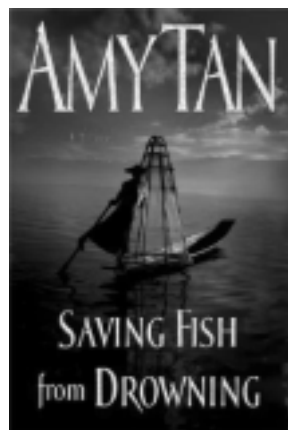
***The Opposite Of Fate: A Book of Musings* (B Tan)**

A collection of essays that spans the author's literary career. Tan assures her

readers that she has no lofty, literary intentions in writing her novels--she writes for herself, and insists that the recurring patterns and themes that critics find in them are entirely their own making. This self-deprecating stance, coupled with Tan's own clarification of her intentions, makes *The Opposite of Fate* feel like an extended, private conversation with the author.

***Saving Fish From Drowning* (F Tan)**

It may be read as a satire, a political statement, a picaresque tale with several "picaros" or simply a story about a tour gone horribly wrong.



Gail Tsukiyama

***Women of the Silk* (F Tsukiyama)**

A sensitively written, impressively researched novel that covers 20 years in the life of Pei, a Chinese girl sent to work in a silk factory during the first decades of the 20th century.

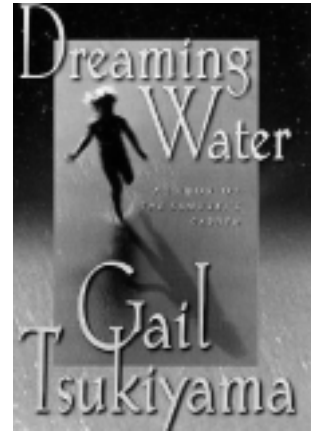
***The Samurai's Garden* (F Tsukiyama)**

Set in Japan just before WWII, Tsukiyama's novel tells of a young Chinese man's encounters with four locals while he recuperates from tuberculosis.

Dreaming Water

(F Tsukiyama)

This powerful novel details the relationship between a mother, daughter and childhood friend coping with the horror of Werner's Syndrome, which ages a person abnormally.



Mysteries

Raymond Chandler

(F Mys Chandler)

Published in 1939, when Raymond Chandler was 50, *The Big Sleep* is the first of the Philip Marlowe novels. Its bursts of sex, violence, and explosively direct prose changed detective fiction forever. Other titles in the Philip Marlowe series include: *Lady in the Lake*, *Farewell My Lovely*, *The Long Goodbye*, and others.

Michael Connelly

(F Mys Connelly)

Michael Connelly has been attracting fans by the droves with his hard-boiled,edgy thrillers. A former crime reporter for the *Los Angeles Times*, Connelly combines a poet's ear for language with a deep

understanding of the criminal mind to create dark, dramatic stories that raise the thriller genre to a new level. His titles include: *Blood Work*, *City of Bones*, and *Closer*.

Sue Grafton

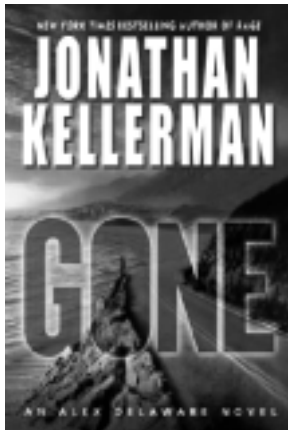
(F Mys Grafton)

Grafton is working her way through the alphabet, with a mystery title for each letter, all following private investigator Kinsey Millhone.

Dashiell Hammett

(F Mys Hammett)

Maltese Falcon, *Thin Man*, and *Woman in the Dark* are among Hammett's best known stories. In a few years of extraordinary creative energy, Dashiell Hammett invented the modern American crime novel.



Jonathan Kellerman

(F Mys Kellerman, F Kellerman, AP K)

Kellerman has written a series of books following Dr. Alex Delaware the financially independent, Los Angeles-based child psychologist and amateur sleuth. Titles include: *Gone*, *Devil's Waltz*, and *Private Eyes*, among others.

Elmore Leonard

(F Mys Leonard, and F Leonard)

Be Cool and *Get Shorty* are among the Elmore Leonard stories which take place in Hollywood, California. While other people write "crime fiction," Leonard's come up with a masterful social comedy that happens to be about criminals (and other fast operators). He's a master of snappy dialogue and dizzying plot twists.

Walter Mosley

(F Mys Mosley, F Mosley)

Gone Fishin', *Little Scarlet*, and *Cinnamon Kiss*, are among the 10 novels starring Easy Rawlins, a black PI in Los Angeles. Mosley's cool prose is sometimes considered noir parody.

Marcia Muller

Muller has featured Francisco PI Sharon McCone in more than 20 mysteries. She started as the lone investigator at a poverty law center in her first outing and now heads a well-respected agency with a talented staff and a strong track record. McCone's exploits often take her through various California towns. Muller is known for crisp plots and great dialogue.

Bill Pronzini

(F Mys Pronzini)

Pronzini's has 30 books about the legendary Nameless Detective, a San Francisco PI.

Classics

Bret Harte

Luck of Roaring Camp and other sketches (F Harte)

Tales of the Gold Rush in California

The Outcasts of Poker Flat, and other Tales

(F Harte)

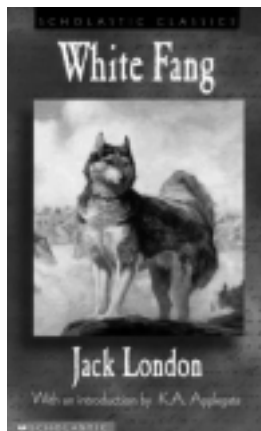
Exiles from an 1850 California mining camp who are caught in a blizzard show how even the "immoral" members of society are capable of acting unselfishly to help others who are in danger

Jack London

The Call of the Wild (F London, YP L, J London)
London's 1903 classic of a kidnapped dog and Yukon gold

Sea Wolf (F London)
On board the Ghost, a sealing schooner bound for Japan, Captain Wolf Larsen is feared and despised by all.

White Fang (Y London)
Anthropomorphic story of a wolf/dog.



William Saroyan

Human Comedy (F Saroyan, YP S)
In California's San Joaquin Valley during World War II, a family's struggles and dreams reflect those of America's second-generation immigrants.

My Name is Aram (F Saroyan)
An autobiographical novel of an Armenian immigrant family in Fresno.

Wallace Stegner

Angle of Repose (F Stegner)
This Pulitzer Prize-winning novel is the magnificent story of four generations of an American family. A wheelchair bound historian embarks on a quest to come to know his deceased grandparents.

Crossing to Safety (F Stegner)
Tracing the interlocking lives, loves, and aspirations of four lifelong friends.

Spectator Bird (F Stegner)
Joe Allston passes through life as a spectator until a postcard from a friend causes him to return to the journals of a trip he had taken years before where he'd sought a link with the past. The memories of that trip move through layers of time and meaning.

John Steinbeck

Cannery Row (F Steinbeck)
Unburdened by the material necessities of the more fortunate, the denizens of Cannery Row discover rewards unknown in more traditional society.

East of Eden (F Steinbeck)
Set in the rich farmland of California's Salinas Valley, this sprawling and often brutal novel follows the intertwined destinies of two families whose generations helplessly reenact the fall of Adam and Eve and the poisonous rivalry of Cain and Abel.

Grapes of Wrath (F Steinbeck)
Pulitzer winning novel of the Joad family's journey to California in which they encounter all of the devastations of the Great Depression.

In Dubious Battle (F Steinbeck)
In the California apple country, nine hundred migratory workers rise up "in dubious battle" against the landowners.

Compiled by Sue Kaplan



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